

[Gor Svenson #1]

LIVING LORE Wheeler

December 31.-1938

[??] E. [Mass?] 1938-9 Paper 1.

A record of a series of interviews with a Swedish-born American who was for most of his adult years a quarry-worker in Gloucester (Bay View and Lanesville) and Rockport, Massachusetts and who is now engaged in lobstering. The thoughts, opinions, reminiscences are always those of the informant. The word-pattern is as far as possible also his. No attempt has been made to record the [Scandian?] dialect. The full effect of the informant's virgin prose can be achieved however by reciting the material in quotes in muffled , somewhat petulant tones while sitting on the end of a teeter-board in a driving rainstorm. Material in parenthesis is offered by the field-worker for purposes of clarification. /?

NAME OF INFORMANT: Gor Svenson

Age: 62

DESCRIPTION: Tall stooped, addled and harassed. High boots, corduroy trousers, lumberman's shirt, one gallus.

(This material is vitally factual. It's publication accompanied by any identification of the informant would unquestionably injure him socially and economically. If pressed both the informant and the field-worker will deny ever having heard of each other.)

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The interviews reported were conducted in the kitchen of the informant's home, a two-storey frame building rented at fifteen dollars a month, heated by three wood-stoves, lit by kerosene lamps and watered by a well seventy-five feet away. There were no storm windows and one ten inc inch by eight inch pane of glass was missing from a window which ever-looks the small plot of land where would be the informant's vegetable garden, if he thought a garden worth-while, which he doesn't. Stuffed in the gaping hole were a dozen copies of the Gloucester Daily Times, a local [organ?] of enlightenment paper . Under the kitchen table is a new pane of glass which the informant will doubtless insert in the window when he gets around to it, which will not be soon. The stove was warm and very noisy. On it was invariable invariably and old fashion coffe coffee -pot. From it coffee was constantly being poured. Sometimes the supply of liquid got low and more water was add added Sometimes the brew was a little thin, and more coffee was tossed in. The stuff was served with evaporated milk and tasted like the devil. On a good many of the visits there were several cans of beer on the table. The beer tasted very good.

Present from time to time as the interviews proceeded were the informant's widowed sister, late-fiftyish, happy, busy and voluble; the informant's unemployed nephew, mid-thirtyish, morose, lethargic and frequently witty; and the informant's five cats , to none of which the field-worker took a fancy.

* * * * * LIVING LORE Wheeler

January - 1939 Rec'd Jan 7th Paper 2.

Continuing record of interviews with Gor Svenson, 62, Swedish-born American lobsterman who for most of his adult years was a quarry-worker in Gloucester and Rockport, Mass.

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----- " Sometime maybe I get sense. Sometime I remember before, not after. Sometime right off I say, "No!" But I won't. A hundred times I make up my mind. But it do no good. Feller comes [aroun'?] says, "Here's ticket Irish sweepstakes. Maybe get a hundred thousand dollars." I buy. Feller comes aroun' says, "Here's ticket treasury balance. Maybe make two three thousand dollars. Finn feller down Stockholm Avenue he make five hundred dollars one two week ago fifty cent ticket." I buy. Feller comes aroun' says, "Come on now, play nigger pool. Any number you want. Play only penny a day. Maybe make five dollars." I give him nickel every day, my number used be my union book. What I win? Nothing. Neber[?] Never nothing.

"So I say myself, all through, never me some more. I keep Irish sweepstakes money, I keep treasury balance nigger pool money. I don't get something I ain't got. But what I got I still got. But last summer feller comes aroun' says, "I got ticket forty-foot cabin cruiser 'sea Dog'. Consolidated Ship Company build. Go over Hart's Boat-house, Gloucester look. Go fifteen knots. All money goes for Thebaud and Bluenose. Everything on level. Only dollar." So I bey buy . I give him dollar. I say myself, "Pretty good win boat. No more rent. Live on boat. All time. Go Florida like summer people. [?] But I don't get boat. Nobody get boat. Still over that Hart's Boat-house. Race all over. Bluenose beat Thebaud. Nova Scotia feller Waters go home, get married Nova Scotia woman, young, plump. Somebody 3 got my dollar!

"I never make money gamble but once. That's in San Francisco when I take care kangazoo. - I make good money then, etc LIVING LORE Wheeler

January - 1939 1/11/39 Paper 3.

Continuing record of interviews with Gor Svenson, 62, Swedish-born lobsterman who for most of his adult years was a quarry-worker in [Glouceste?] and Rockport, Mass. (The last account closed with [?] Svenson setting out on a steamer from San Francisco to New York. [??] He refused to discuss that trip. Grounds: he didn't enjoy remembering it. Further,

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it appears that after arriving in New York he shipped on a sailing vessel [to?] Sweden, returned to his home village, remained for a period with his parents and then came back to this country, again to New York. The good man insists that he discussed this meandering in detail during one of his seances with the field-worker. He didn't.)

"I tell you. I tell you this feller Roosevelt he knows what he is talking, yes, he knows. They do not fool him, nobody does. Henry, Henry my nephew, he does not know anything, he says people do not want to go to war. He does not know anything. Roosevelt, I tell / you, knows. People don't want - what does that matter? I don't want, you don't want, Henry don't want - Harr! He tell that Congress what, I tell you. He says get big soldiers, get big sailors, we gotta have war. Sure we have. That Hitler he's a crazy man. All the Germans are crazy. I know Germans when I am in New York. They are all crazy. They don't know what they want. The French they are crazy, too. I have seen the French. The place where I am living in New York there is a French feller. He is crazy. All the time he is crazy. Hitler and the French. That is the trouble. Hitler and the French and the English. They want war. We will have to fight them. What do English think they are, anyway? They are crazy. They have to have everything. No matter where I go around the world they get English 2 there. They're crazy. Look at the papers. Hitler, the French and the English they try to start war couple months ago about some place nobody ever heard of. You never heard of it. I never heard of it. Henry my nephew he is crazy but he never heard of it, too. I tell you. That Roosevelt is right. We got have war. We got go fight Hitler, the French and the English or they come over here and beat up everybody. That's what they do. We'll lick them, I bet. America and Sweden, that's the best fighters in the world!

"I know those Germans. I tell you. When [I do?] back in New York from Sweden, etc.

[????????]

PUB. Living Lore in [New England?]

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[Massachusetts?]

[TITLE?] Swedish Lobsterman - Gor [Svenson?]

[? Harry?] Wheeler

[DATE 2/23/39?] WDS. PP. [6?]

CHECKER DATE

SOURCES GIVEN (?) Interview

COMMENTS?]

February - 1939 2/23/39 Paper 7.

(Proceeding with account of interviews with Gor Svenson, 63, - he had a birthday - Swedish-born American lobsterman who for most of his adult years was a quarryman in Rockport and Gloucester, Mass.)

"By gosh, you should been here last night! There was big fight over Curtis Street, two, three o'clock morning. So much noise you think they hear all over Pigeon Cove, all over Cape. So much noise you think maybe John Spates, Jimmie Quinn (local gendarmes - field-worker) come throw them all Salem jail rest of life! Shout, swear, throw rocks, throw bottles, throw kerosene lamp, wonder no set fire to place. Bunch fellers got place over Pine Pit, stone house made from grout (the most worthless of the granite - field-worker). The boys make, the young boys make for play house, but the big fellers take, hang around, play cards, drink, fight, sometime maybe take girl there, I don't know. But last night they have big fight. They play cards and one feller he don't like way other feller

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play, so first those two fellers fight, then pretty soon all the fellers fight. Big noise, I tell you!
“Make me think of days I first come Rockport, etc